The Transition Center

Overseas Briefing Center

...with you wherever you go...

Bidding and Assignment Resources

for an overseas or domestic tour

Logistical Information

for an international move

Expert Assistance

from people who know the lifestyle

FSIOBCInfoCenter@state.gov
www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc
http://tc.fsi.state.gov

Room E2126
Transition Center at FSI
Department of State
703.302.7276 / 77

What Factors Are You Considering When Conducting Post Research?

Learning the language
How far away are we from extended family?
Spouse/partner employment

- Working inside the Embassy/Consulate
- Employment on the local economy
- Telework
- Community service / Volunteer options
- Creating a home-based business
- Keeping credentials current
- Using my skills

Schooling / Education for My Children

- Curriculum differences (American, bi-lingual, international)
- Special needs education
- Boarding schools
- Communicating with children in college

Logistics of the Move

- Shipping Pets / Vet Care
- Housing
- What to bring with us
- Make/model of car to bring
- Transportation to and from an overseas location

Financial cost
Security
Health concerns / food allergies / dietary restrictions
Climate
Starting a Family Overseas
Child care
Extra-curricular activities for kids
Caring for elderly parents from afar
Keeping yourself / family thriving and learning
Continuing Education for Spouse/Partner
Cultural Adaptation
Building a community of friends
Finding a religious/spiritual community at post
Managing an Unaccompanied Tour
Evacuations and civil unrest
Separations

BIDDING RESOURCES
ASSIGNMENT RESEARCH

Overseas Briefing Center (OBC)
Room E-2126, Foreign Service Institute (FSI)
www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc (Internet)
http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/tc/default.asp (OpenNet)
FSIOBCInfoCenter@state.gov / (703) 302-7276 or 77

OBC Hours for Post Research
Open Hours: Mon-Fri 8:15 am to 5:00 pm
Extended Hours: On selected evenings and Saturdays.

Conducting Post Research

As you organize your bid list or conduct research for your next post, the following resources can help you make educated decisions about your next overseas assignment. OBC is the best one-stop resource center for information specific to the Foreign Service lifestyle overseas.

Post Briefing Boxes

At OBC, find over 260 post-specific briefing boxes, representing embassies and consulates worldwide! Materials include everything from Welcome to Post cables, medical information, security issues, employment for family members, and schooling for children. Information is provided by the Community Liaison Office (CLO) coordinators in the field and other sources.

Post Info To Go

http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/tc/epb/epb.asp (Intranet)
Information contained in the center briefing boxes is also available online. Take the opportunity to find all relevant materials available electronically in a one-stop electronic format. Pertinent links give you access to a full view of post life. The *Post Info To Go* pages also allow you to email key information to yourself and your family members. **No intranet?** Employees and family members without Intranet access can email an OBC Resource Specialist and we'll forward documents to you!

Post Videos and Other Audiovisuals

OBC's collection of over 200 audiovisual resources includes post videos, photo collections, and training DVDs that can be borrowed overnight or viewed in the center. Post videos highlight daily life as a member of a specific embassy community. Videos can be viewed in OBC or borrowed for home use. (Policy: 2-day check out.) Get together with your friends and colleagues and organize a video-viewing party for after-hours research! Over 75 post videos are also available on the BNET site at http://bnet.state.gov/category.asp?category_id=146 (OpenNet).

Personal Post Insights (PPIs)

PPIs highlight anonymous feedback about life at post, including schooling, employment for family members, housing, life at post for singles, what car to bring, pets and vet care, available activities, and more. They are not official Department of State publications; they are written by people serving at post, expressing a variety of opinions and perspectives. About 2,000 of the most recent PPIs are also available on the OBC Intranet site at: http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/tc . Employees and family members without Intranet access can email an OBC Resource Specialist and we'll email them to you.

Sample Comment

There are all the major car dealerships here and a lot of vehicles for sale by owner. 4WD is not necessary unless you are planning to travel the back roads in the country. Taxis are everywhere and more than fairly priced.

Cultural Resources

The OBC provides cultural resources, including books, access to e-books and our Culture Shock series. OBC also maintains a subscription with the Internet available CultureGrams. To access CultureGrams, visit http://online.culturegrams.com/index.php. (for login information, contact the OBC). CultureGrams offers the World Edition, a U.S. States Edition, a Kids Edition, and the Provinces Edition Canada). Find the most up-to-date information about the people, customs, lifestyle, transportation, climate, and much more. View photos, read interviews from in-country experts, and explore the video gallery.

School Brochures and Yearbooks

In-center, the OBC offers brochures and yearbooks, representing schools in overseas locations. View in Center or checkout for home use.

Logistics of An International Move

The Overseas Briefing Center provides over 100 handouts to assist with the logistical planning for an international move. All resources are available on our Intranet website and many are also on our Internet. OBC's comprehensive collection of materials also include resources from other offices within the Department of State and organizations/businesses that provide support and services to the foreign affairs community.

Foreign Service Assignment Notebook: What Do I Do Now?

www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c49274.htm

The OBC offers a comprehensive guide to preparing for an international move, guiding U.S. government employees and their family members through an otherwise confusing process. Chapters cover: preparation, mail and pouch services, allowances, medical information, insurance, income taxes, automobiles, pets, employment for family members, education for children, and more.

Access to OBC Materials for Family Members

Family members are welcome to peruse the resources of the Overseas Briefing Center. Children (supervised) are also welcome at any time. For family members not in the Washington area during the bidding process, or who are unable to visit us in person, OBC staff answer questions via phone and email. All post-specific materials can also be emailed directly to an individual. Hours, directions, and access information are available on the OBC Internet website. www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c7414.htm.

Keep Your Individual Circumstances In Mind

EVERY EMPLOYEE and FAMILY MEMBER
has a unique situation and priorities. Below are helpful resources for individual concerns.

Traveling with Pets: Pet Restrictions and Quarantines

Pet transportation information is constantly changing. Please contact OBC's personnel for the latest developments. Some posts do not allow importation of pets. If taking your pet overseas is a priority, be sure to check what restrictions may apply. The OBC maintains a database entitled "PET IMPORT REQUIREMENTS BY COUNTRY" on the OBC Intranet website. Most posts outline pet restrictions in their Post Welcome Cable (TM-3), available in the OBC or through *Post Info To Go*. More limited pet shipping information can be found by checking updates at www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c10442.htm. Detailed information regarding import restrictions is available in hard copy at the OBC. We encourage foreign affairs personnel to contact an OBC Resource Specialist when shipping a pet overseas.

Family Member Employment

For many Foreign Service couples, family member employment plays an important role in choosing an overseas assignment. The Family Liaison Office (FLO) is the primary point of contact for questions relating to employment for family members. During orientation sessions at FSI, a representative from the Family Liaison Office (FLO) briefs employees and family members regarding family member employment options overseas.

For more information, contact the Family Liaison Office employment staff at 800-440-0397, 202-647-1076, or email FLOAskEmployment@state.gov. For general questions about FLO programs and services, contact FLO@state.gov. FLO's internet website is located at www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo.

Family Member Employment Reports (FAMER)

The Family Member Employment Report, known as the FAMER, is published by the Family Liaison Office and offers a snapshot of employment for family members at a post overseas.
Hardcopy: Available in the Overseas Briefing Center
Intranet: http://intranet.hr.state.sbu/offices/flo/Pages/default.aspx
By Email: Family members can request this information via email FLOAskEmployment@state.gov.

Family members who want to work should visit the Family Liaison Office (FLO) Internet web site at www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1959.htm. There are many considerations to take into account when working overseas: availability of work opportunities inside the Mission, availability of work opportunities on the local economy, tax implications, social security, host country regulations, bilateral work agreements, permission from the embassy or consulate to work outside the Mission, home-based businesses, teleworking, and more. Family members should also explore the issues of language proficiency and any cultural sensitivity in the work environment.

Family Member Employment Training

The Transition Center Training Division at FSI conducts family member employment courses and workshops. Four classes, held several times per year, prepare spouse/partners for portable career paths, working inside the Mission, on the local economy, and in entrepreneurial endeavors. View available course schedules at www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/fslstraining/index.htm.

- Basics for Overseas Employment (MQ703)
- Employment Tools for Foreign Service Life (MQ704)
- International Development and NGOs: Employment Options (MQ705)
- Portable Careers: Employment Options(MQ706)

Family members looking for language training options at FSI can access information on the Transition to Washington webpage at www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c1932.htm.

School-Age Dependents: Overseas Schools

The U.S. Department of State provides assistance to 197 overseas schools through direct and indirect support programs designed to promote an American-style education. Fact sheets on schools are available on both the Internet and the Intranet. Detailed information on DOS-assisted schools and other schooling options (i.e., International, British, French, private or local) is available in the OBC Post Briefing Boxes and on the Office of Overseas Schools website.

Do not assume that because there is no American School with an American curriculum at a post that education is inadequate. Assessing the adequacy of education at post requires detailed research. OBC can provide appropriate referrals.

Start your research with the Office of Overseas Schools (OS).
Intranet: http://aopros.a.state.gov
Internet: www.state.gov/m/a/os

The Family Liaison Office (FLO) provides comprehensive information on education and youth considerations for Foreign Service families, including boarding school options, home schooling, special needs education, gifted and talented, parent advocacy, and more. Visit them online at www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm.

Special Needs Information for School-age Children

If your child has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and/or a documented learning disability, we highly recommend that you view the Transition Center video *Special Education Overseas Seminar* or register to attend the seminar in person. More information is available at www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/fslstraining/c48210.htm.

To best prepare for an overseas assignment with your child's education success in mind, take the time to schedule appointments with MED's Employee Consultation Service (ECS), the Office of Overseas Schools, and the Family Liaison Office.

Office of Medical Affairs / Employee Consultation Service (MED/ECS)
www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21952.htm
(ECS) offers consultation, evaluation, and referral services to families of U.S. government employees assigned to diplomatic posts abroad who have school-aged children with learning, emotional, or other disabilities.

Office of Overseas Schools (OS)
www.state.gov/m/a/os/c18630.htm

Family Liaison Office (FLO)
www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c22458.htm

Assignment in the United States: Heading to a Domestic Post

The OBC has developed bidding information for destinations within the United States. Domestic assignment briefing folders are available in the OBC, covering more than 35 cities. City life, housing, and school options plus field office details will give you a head start. Information can also be found on the Intranet *Post Info To Go* pages for domestic assignments.
Intranet: http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/tc/epb/epb.asp
Note: *Domestic posts are mingled in the drop down with international posts.*
Internet: http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c20448.htm

Unaccompanied Tours

Those assigned to or considering an "unaccompanied tour" can find support information in the Overseas Briefing from a variety of sources, including the Family Liaison Office (FLO). FLO offers comprehensive information on their internet website at www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c14521.htm.

Chapter 25, Unaccompanied Assignments, of the *Foreign Service Assignment Notebook* provides a listing of offices that provide support, available resources, and things to consider.
www.state.gov/documents/organization/162968.pdf

ADDITIONAL COUNTRY INFORMATION
www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c10391.htm

GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

Post Reports
http://diplopedia.state.gov (Intranet only)
Updated post reports are available on Diplopedia Intranet website. For U.S. government employees assigned to a U.S. embassy or consulate overseas without Intranet access, please contact the OBC and we will send one out to you!

Post Classification and Payment Tables
http://aoprals.state.gov/Web920/location.asp?menu_id=95
Allowances and differentials by country.

Foreign Affairs Related Offices and Organizations
www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/76308.htm

U.S. Embassies, Consulates, and Diplomatic Missions Websites
www.usembassy.gov
Internet links for U.S. embassies, consulates, and diplomatic missions around the world.

Global Social Media sites for U.S. Embassies and Consulates
www.state.gov/r/pa/dcc/socialmedia

Schooling Resources for Foreign Service Children

Office of Overseas Schools (OS)
www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21952.htm
Offers information on schools supported by the U.S. Department of State and non-assisted schools. Parents may also contact the Community Liaison Office coordinator at post for more information.

The Family Liaison Office (FLO)
www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm
Offers advice on appropriate schooling options and resources to make educated decisions about schooling options overseas and in the united States.

Get Prepared with Foreign Service Life Skills Training at FSI
www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/fslstraining/index.htm
Personal and Financial Planning, Taxes, Logistical Considerations for Going Overseas, the Realities of Foreign Service Life, Foreign Service Children, Singles in the FS Community, Employment Options for Family Members, Managing Rental Property from Overseas, Traveling with Pets, Resilience and Success Overseas, Protocol and U.S. Representation, and more.

Inspector General Reports
http://oig.state.gov/lbry
Inspection reports summarizing the main tasks and challenges at post (not available for all countries).

Travel Warnings and Consular Information Sheets
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4965.html
Summaries of dangers, areas of instability, health concerns, crime, and unusual currency or entry requirements.

Background Notes
www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn
Facts about the land, people, history, government, political conditions, economy, and foreign relations of independent states, some dependencies, and areas of special sovereignty.

CIA World Factbook
https://ww.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook
Summaries of country information and rankings by various factors.

Health Information for Foreign Countries
http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention immunizations and health information.

International U.S. Commercial Service Offices
http://export.gov/worldwide_us/index.asp

Library of Congress Country Studies
http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html
Description and analysis of the historical setting and the social, economic, political, and national security systems and institutions of selected countries.

United States Agency for International Development
www.usaid.gov | http://blog.usaid.gov
Locations and overviews for country-specific programs.

Overseas Security Advisory Council
https://www.osac.gov
Global security news and reports.

Peace Corps
www.peacecorps.gov
Find out what it's like to be a volunteer from the people who know best — the volunteers themselves.

NON-GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW)
www.aafsw.org
This organization connects the American diplomatic community at home and abroad with resources and support programs. Their site hosts useful articles about overseas life in general. The Livelines yahoo group offers 24/7 answers to questions about posts for those who have passed the Foreign Service exam or are already members of the U.S. Foreign Service community.

Foreign Service Youth Foundation (FSYF)
www.fsyf.org
This organization supports children, teens and families affiliated with U.S. foreign affairs agencies and strives to help young people adapt to their changing environments and make the most of their Foreign Service experiences. They sponsor many kid-centered activities, including newsletters, awards and contests, and re-entry to the United States programming.

The American Chambers of Commerce Abroad (AmChams)
www.uschamber.com/international/directory
This organization advances the interests of American businesses overseas. They are voluntary associations of American companies and individuals doing business in a particular country, as well as firms and individuals of that country who operate in the United States. Over 100 AmChams in over 100 countries are affiliated with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

International Chamber of Commerce
www.iccwbo.org
Provides a forum for businesses and other organizations to examine and understand the nature and significance of the major shifts taking place in the world economy.

BBC News Country Profiles
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/country_profiles/default.stm
Basic country information, plus audio/video clips and articles.

City Mayors: Running the World's Cities
www.citymayors.com
Extensive information about cities around the world.

CultureGrams (OBC Subscription)
http://online.culturegrams.com
Find information about the people, customs, lifestyle, transportation, climate, and much more. View photos, read interviews from in-country experts, and explore the video gallery. CultureGrams also features a separate Kids Edition so the whole family can learn together! U.S. government employees and family members assigned abroad can email the Overseas Briefing Center for passwords.

Expat Blogs
www.expat-blog.com and www.glimpseabroad.org

Expat Exchange
www.expatexchange.com
Connect with other expats already living in the destination city/country via chat groups to get the lay of the land. They also offer an extensive listing of expat blogs.

Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas
www.fawco.org
International network of independent volunteer clubs and associations.

GlobalEDGE
http://globaledge.msu.edu
Country data resources from the Michigan State University for global business knowledge.

Language and Cultural Resources
http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu
Includes video and audio materials for selected countries.

Lonely Planet Destinations
www.lonelyplanet.com
Find your next travel adventure using their country information.

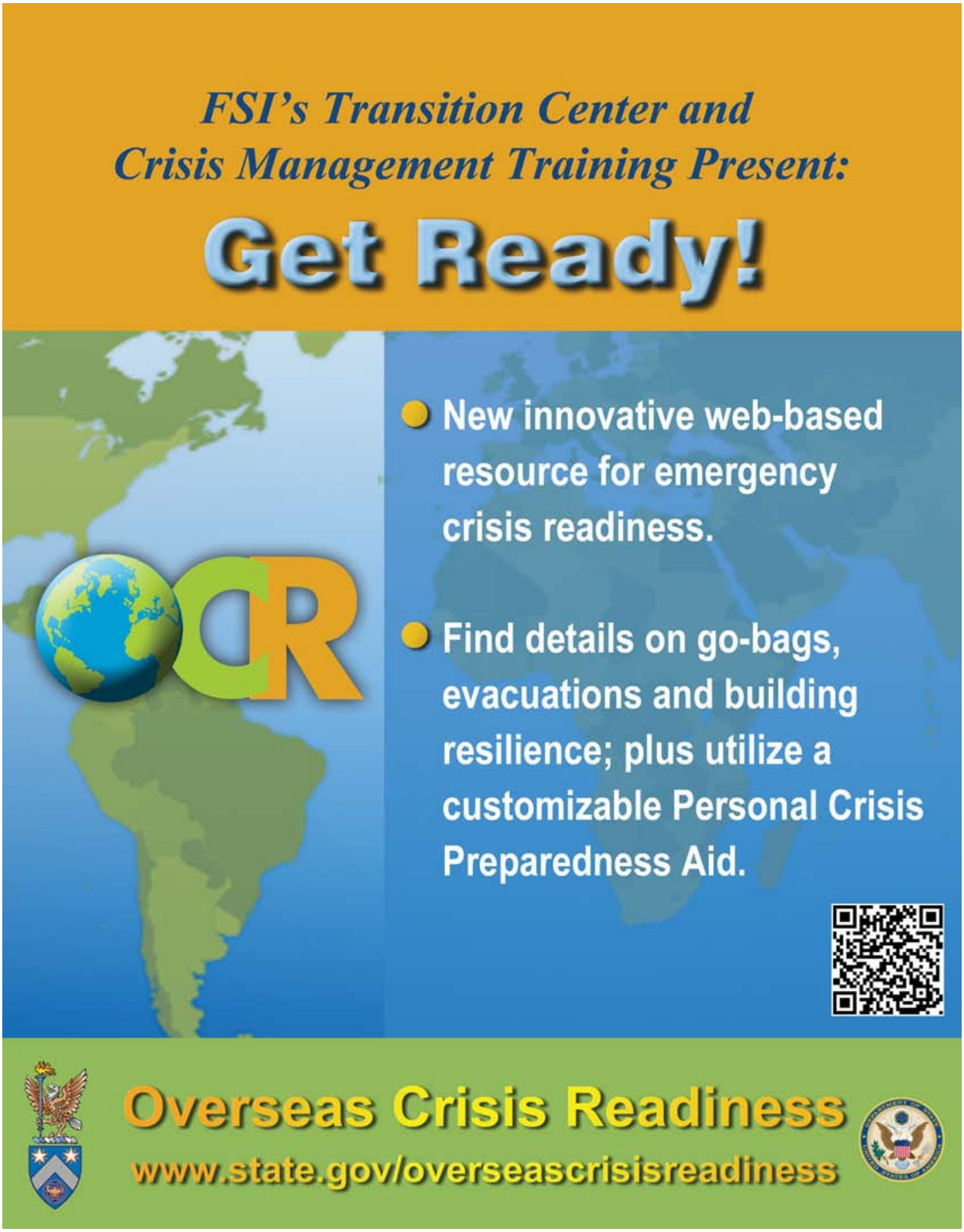
Real Post Reports | Real School Reports
Tales from a Small Planet
www.talesmag.com
First person descriptions of overseas posts from Tales from a Small Planet. Their information is free.

Wikipedia (online encyclopedia)
www.wikipedia.org
Provides general, frequently updated country information and links.

World66
www.world66.com
Travel guide written by users.

The above listing is provided ***FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY*** *and in no way constitutes an endorsement, expressed or implied, by the Department of State. Links to websites are for the convenience of the user and do not constitute an official endorsement or approval of any private sector website, product, service, or privacy policy.*

Consider your transition as an opportunity to learn more about personal crisis preparedness. This module is especially helpful to family members.



The Transition Center (FSI/TC)

Foreign Service Institute, Building E
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520
Tel: (703) 302-7272
www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc

For questions regarding courses, programs and services,
please see contact information below:

Career Transition Center
FSICTC@state.gov or (703) 302-7407

Overseas Briefing Center
FSIOBCInfoCenter@state.gov or (703) 302-7276/7

Security Overseas Seminars
FSISOS@state.gov or (703) 302-7269

Training Division
FSITCTraining@state.gov or (703) 746-2358

High Stress Assignment Outbrief Program
FSITCOutbrief@state.gov or (703) 302-7272